



# Pacific Southwest Region

# Partnership for Sustainable Communities



## Accomplishments 2009-2013



# Partnership for Sustainable Communities Accomplishments Report 2009-2013

## *Executive Summary*

The Regional Administrators for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for the Pacific Southwest Region are pleased to submit this report on accomplishments of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities for the years 2009-2013.

In 2009, President Obama challenged our agencies to improve how we work together, in order to help communities around the country better meet their housing, transportation, and environmental goals. In our region, HUD, DOT, and EPA have forged a partnership to streamline resources, better collaborate with local stakeholders, and achieve superior results for communities. By coordinating federal investments and technical assistance, we are meeting economic, environmental, and community objectives with each dollar spent. These efforts are making a real difference in communities and neighborhoods.

What makes this partnership successful is that it allows communities to use funds in ways that best fit their own needs and visions. As the partnership celebrates its fourth anniversary, we want to highlight the hard work and successes of communities in the Pacific Southwest Region. The efforts by community leaders, transportation agencies, and housing advocates offer best practices for comprehensive land use and transportation planning that advances economic growth and meets our environmental and health goals.

The case studies in this report illustrate that the resources of this partnership are supporting communities in their efforts to design neighborhoods that provide more housing and transportation choices. By working together at all levels of government, we can help create a brighter, more sustainable future.



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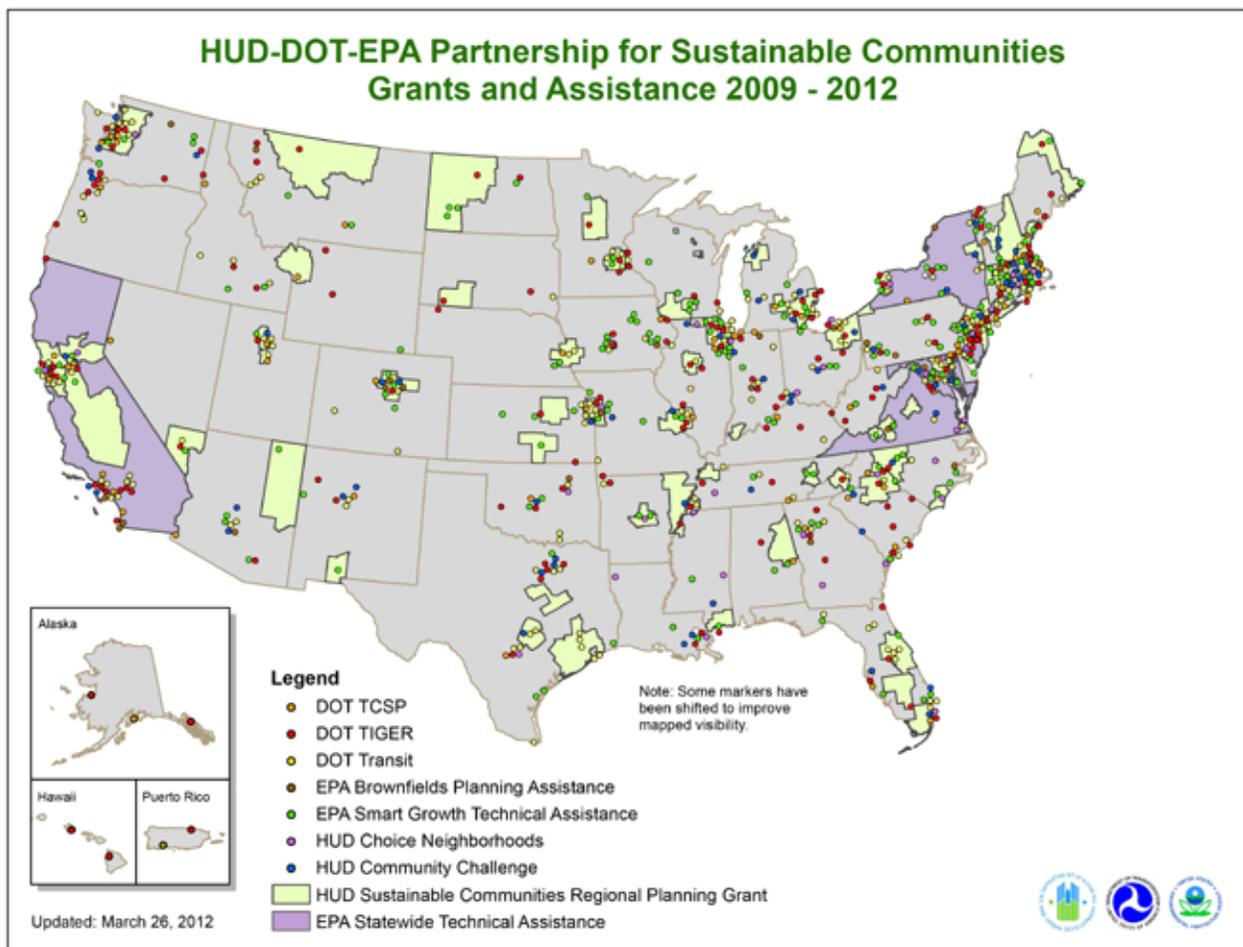
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## Introduction

Since 2009, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have been coordinating their programs to help communities around the country better meet their housing, transportation, and environmental goals. Interagency collaboration through the Partnership for Sustainable Communities uses taxpayer money more efficiently and gets better results for communities. By coordinating federal investments in infrastructure, facilities, and services, communities can meet multiple objectives with each dollar spent.

The partnership has provided over \$3.5 billion in assistance to more than 700 communities nationwide. Partnership grant and technical assistance recipients are in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. As of April 2012, partnership agencies received more than 7,700 applications for assistance, requesting almost \$102 billion. Demand for partnership assistance far outstrips available resources.



The Partnership's work is guided by six principles of livability:

- 1. Provide more transportation choices** *Develop safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.*
  
- 2. Promote equitable, affordable housing** *Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.*
  
- 3. Enhance economic competitiveness** *Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs by workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.*
  
- 4. Support existing communities** *Target federal funding toward existing communities—through such strategies as transit-oriented, mixed-use development and land recycling—to increase community revitalization, improve the efficiency of public works investments, and safeguard rural landscapes.*
  
- 5. Coordinate policies and leverage investment** *Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy.*
  
- 6. Value communities and neighborhoods** *Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban, or suburban.*

This report summarizes significant accomplishments and ongoing work by HUD, DOT, EPA, and other partners under the Partnership for Sustainable Communities in the Pacific Southwest Region. The cases highlighted here are models for communities that aim to be greener, healthier, more economically competitive, and more affordable. For more case studies, please visit [www.sustainablecommunities.gov](http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov).

# 1

## Providing More Transportation Choices

### ◆ High-Speed Rail Sustainability Workgroup

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In an effort to influence one of the largest infrastructure projects in the nation, EPA created a workgroup to promote sustainability in planning, design, construction, and operation of the proposed California High-Speed Rail system. The workgroup includes EPA, HUD, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA), and the California Strategic Growth Council. The agencies meet regularly to promote partnership principles in the planning and design of the proposed system, and in planning efforts in nearby communities likely to be effected by the system. Efforts are guided by a memorandum of understanding (MOU), developed by the agencies and signed in September 2011, which establishes a common vision for project benefits and a forum for collaboration. The sustainability goals laid out in the MOU were included in CHSRA's 2012 Business Plan, strengthening the commitment to these goals.

Work under the MOU includes identifying opportunities to maximize benefits to communities from the proposed project, aligning agency initiatives, and establishing roles and expectations. EPA and CHSRA lead bi-monthly coordination calls, and subgroups engage in ongoing efforts in the following areas: sustainable, livable communities; materials, design, and construction; energy efficiency and renewable energy; water resources; and system wide sustainability policy. This work gave the partnership agencies the opportunity to influence CHSRA's system wide sustainability policy.

Since the first section of the system to be funded is in the San Joaquin Valley, this effort has supported other work that the agencies are doing in the City of Fresno and



*Rendering of proposed high-speed rail station area (Image courtesy of California High-Speed Rail Authority)*

throughout the valley. Work in 2012 focused on station area planning and steps to reach CHSRA's system wide goal of operating with 100% renewable energy, which included work with NREL. CHSRA adopted a Strategic Energy Plan in January 2012 and is working toward many of the goals identified in the plan, including facilities that achieve net-zero energy use. A workshop was held in Fresno in April 2012, organized by EPA partnership and Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) staff, where federal, state, and local government and community organizations discussed plans for the future station area. Workgroup members also reviewed the request for proposals (RFP) for CHSRA and FRA-funded station area planning work in Fresno, and EPA provided sample language for greening other CHSRA RFPs. EPA also organized a training session with local and state colleagues, led by nonprofit group Smart Growth America, to improve messaging and communication skills about livability.

Workgroup members continue to focus on future station area planning in communities where high-speed rail stations are proposed. Five cities (Fresno, Merced, San Jose, Gilroy, and Palmdale) are the first to be offered funding from CHSRA and FRA to conduct station area planning. EPA highlighted the need to identify contaminated sites as part of redevelopment planning and will continue to coordinate with other workgroup members and the cities to support brownfields assessment work. HUD identified where housing and community development funding has been used in the communities and how those investments intersect with planning for high-speed rail and associated development. FTA led an effort to provide input to metropolitan planning organizations on regional transit connectivity to high-speed rail stations. The workgroup will continue to focus on station area planning workshops and transit connectivity planning in the future.

### **Grand Boulevard Initiative, San Mateo County, California**

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The Grand Boulevard Initiative, which received funding from DOT's Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) II planning grant program in 2010, is bringing together nineteen cities, two counties, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and other stakeholders. The initiative will integrate transportation and land use along an historic 43-mile state highway corridor (El Camino Real) between San Francisco and San Jose. EPA, FTA, and HUD are working with local government representatives of the initiative to explore how federal agencies can support the effort. To provide models for future corridor improvements, the San Mateo County Transit District (Samtrans) is coordinating the TIGER funding to redesign segments of El Camino Real in four cities (San Carlos, San Bruno, South San Francisco, and Daly City) as complete streets. Complete streets are streets that are designed and operated to enable safe and convenient access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. EPA promoted broadening the complete streets designs to incorporate additional sustainability objectives, including green infrastructure (vegetated bioswales and tree canopy), reusable and recycled materials, cool pavements, compost, and energy-conserving street lighting. Samtrans invited EPA to join the project team to incorporate these green street objectives into the process. EPA conducted site visits to four of the

participating cities, providing recommendations on urban greening features that could be incorporated into the designs. HUD also provided information to initiative partners about its housing and community development programs, funding sources, and goals.

Because El Camino Real is classified as a state highway and several of the proposed redesign elements are non-standard, it is necessary to vet them through Caltrans' design exceptions approval process. This project is intended to serve as a model for other cities with similar objectives for state-owned roadways.

In addition to the TIGER II planning grant, Samtrans was also awarded \$365,000 in Transportation, Community, and System Preservation funds from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to take one of the complete street case studies to 100% design. This provided an opportunity to develop complementary green street elements. Since EPA is participating in discussions with Caltrans about their design exceptions approval process, they proposed that the agencies partner to support model complete streets/green streets designs, with Grand Boulevard as a case study. Feedback from the cities is also helping EPA to tailor its efforts in providing technical assistance to communities on transportation design projects.

### ◆ Complete Streets Workshop, Modesto, California

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The City of Modesto, California was chosen to receive assistance on complete streets policies and planning from the EPA Office of Sustainable Communities' Building Blocks Technical Assistance Program in 2012. EPA worked with the city to plan a workshop on how to improve complete streets planning and implementation. The workshop was held in Modesto on May 24, 2012 and included presentations on complete streets concepts and best practices by a technical expert. The workshop also included a walking tour of existing conditions in Modesto's downtown and the McHenry Avenue corridor. Participants discussed how multimodal street improvements can be implemented through Modesto's planning and policy documents, including a general plan update funded by the HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant to the Smart Valley Places Consortium. City planning staff identified the McHenry corridor, one of six corridors of focus in the general plan and a historically significant street, as a potential complete streets demonstration project. Staff from neighboring cities and the



*The McHenry Avenue corridor, focus of the complete streets workshop (Photo courtesy of Dan Hardy)*

metropolitan planning organization also attended, broadening the impact of the workshop to the surrounding region.

The workshop resulted in recommendations for short- and long-term actions that the city could undertake to implement its complete streets policies. Recommendations included better cross-departmental communication to support complete streets implementation throughout city plans and processes, and the use of complete streets as an organizing principle in work programs and capital improvement program prioritization. Workshop participants also identified near-term actions, including a pilot program for improved crosswalks and addition of bike lane painting as a standard practice in repaving.

Since the workshop, complete streets concepts have been gaining public support, near-term actions such as repainting lanes are being implemented, and city staff are seeking funding for larger improvement projects.

### ◆ **Metropolitan Planning Organization Meetings**

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EPA and HUD joined DOT, participating in annual Overall Work Program (OWP) meetings of metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) throughout California in 2011. OWP meetings are an annual opportunity for MPOs to share with DOT what transportation planning processes they will be undertaking. EPA and HUD joined these meetings to present and discuss the work of the partnership and to encourage coordination between MPO planning activities and the partnership. A special focus for the agencies was on MPOs in the Central Valley, to encourage coordination between planning for the California High-Speed Rail system and planning activities funded by HUD Regional Planning grants to the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valley regions. The agencies are participating in these meetings again in 2013, since planning for the high-speed rail system has advanced.

### ◆ **Sustainable Transit Guidelines Project**

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EPA and FTA collaborated in an effort led by Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), a 104-mile San Francisco Bay Area rapid transit system with 44 stations and over 370,000 weekday passengers. The team partnered with 12 other major transit agencies from across the U.S. and Canada, to develop comprehensive guidelines for environmental sustainability in the transit industry. They compiled best practices and case studies into a report, which went through the American Public Transportation Association's rigorous peer review process to become an official standard in March 2011. The report makes recommendations for planning, designing, and operating multi-modal sustainable transit that reduces a community's environmental footprint and enhances quality of life by making travel more enjoyable, affordable, and convenient. EPA, FTA, and BART have presented widely on the sustainability guidelines, and continue to conduct outreach,

promote implementation of best practices, and compile new case studies. For more information visit: [www.epa.gov/region9/waste/features/green-transit/](http://www.epa.gov/region9/waste/features/green-transit/).

The guidelines were used on three major BART station upgrades that resulted in improved public accessibility and wayfinding to support expanded ridership. The upgrades will save over 1.2 million kilowatt-hours of electricity each year and \$153,000 in utility bills. These upgrades will also reduce carbon emissions by more than 300 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, annually. BART also replaced over 1,200 chemically treated wooden railroad ties with recycled plastic ties made from 3.3 million grocery bags and 739,000 plastic bottles, replaced petroleum-based track lubricating oil with biodegradable soybean oil, and saved over \$711,000 in landfill disposal fees by requiring recycling of construction and demolition debris.

## 2

## Promoting Equitable, Affordable Housing

### ◆ Honolulu Community Challenge Planning Grant Support

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With the goal of maintaining and promoting housing for low- and moderate-income families, the City and County of Honolulu received a HUD Community Challenge Planning Grant in 2011 to develop a transit-oriented housing strategy around a planned rail transit system. HUD, DOT, and EPA explored how they could coordinate this work with other relevant efforts in Honolulu and throughout the island of Oahu. EPA connected the work with other efforts under its strategic plan in the State of Hawaii. FHWA connected the city and county with resources on climate change adaptation and hazard mitigation in transportation corridors, including the state hazard mitigation plan developed with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

In support of the grant, HUD, DOT, and EPA shared public engagement tools and identified local partners with whom the city and county could work. HUD coordinated with National Park Service (NPS) staff to facilitate discussion about a NPS deed restriction on a piece of property proposed for redevelopment along a proposed rail transit route. HUD also partnered with the University of Hawaii School of Architecture and the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco's Community Development staff to hold workshops in support of Honolulu's efforts to explore the use of prefabricated building materials for affordable, green residential transit oriented development (TOD). Honolulu's TOD housing strategy gained momentum with a TOD Affordable Housing Task Force reviewing potential approaches to housing affordability. The task force considered financing mechanisms, delivery systems, and a geographic area for developing a catalytic project to maintain housing affordability around the rail transit route.

FHWA and EPA supplemented the work under the HUD grant with projects that address vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction on Oahu, encouraging a variety of transportation modes. An example is the Honolulu Bike Share project, which has support from many partners in and around Honolulu. The Bike Share project team is developing a scope of work and identifying funding for a feasibility study and implementation plan.

FHWA also partnered with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to leverage community planning resources of the partnership agencies with those of the emergency management and resilience planning communities throughout the Pacific Basin through the Pacific Risk Management Ohana (PRiMO). PRiMO is an international group of federal, state, territorial, and other Pacific Island partners, who will be using a planning project led by Oahu's MPO as a pilot to weave together issues of community sustainability, climate adaptation, affordable housing, and active living; partners include the Oahu MPO, HUD, FHWA, EPA, NOAA, Hawaii State Office of Planning, University of Hawaii, and the Pacific Disaster Center.

### ◆ EPA/HUD Support of Tribal Green Building

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Through various projects, EPA and HUD have collaborated to encourage green building practices on tribal lands. Beginning in 2010, EPA worked with HUD's Southwest Office of Native American Programs to provide technical assistance to tribes on the adoption of green building codes. Through these efforts, the Kayenta Township of the Navajo Nation in Arizona became the first tribal government in the country to adopt an international green building code. The Kayenta Township also received technical assistance from EPA's Office of Sustainable Communities (OSC) on sustainable development and smart growth planning that met tribal priorities. This project was supported by OSC's Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities program. To learn more:

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/0/389a6e28ea0bd5de85257872005116a6?OpenDocument>.

The Pinoleville Pomo Nation (Pinoleville) in California also received EPA technical assistance towards the adoption of their green building codes. Pinoleville wanted to adopt green building codes that reflected their cultural values and sustainability goals. In 2011, the tribe began construction of two straw bale pilot homes funded by HUD, using the codes developed



*Construction incorporating green building methods in Kayenta Township (Photo courtesy of Kayenta Township)*

with EPA support. EPA, HUD, and Pinoleville continue to share lessons learned on developing culturally appropriate green building codes.

To expand the reach of this work, EPA and HUD incorporated EPA's green building labeling programs – EnergySTAR, Indoor airPLUS, and WaterSense – into HUD's training for grantees under the Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG) program in 2011. The ICDBG grants fund tribal new home construction and retrofits, as well as community buildings and infrastructure. The training helped guide \$7.4 million in HUD funding to tribes in the Pacific Southwest Region in FY11. Information on Weatherization Plus Healthy Homes, LEED for Neighborhood Development, and the National Tribal Green Building Codes Work Group was also part of the training. The first round of trainings, in Phoenix and Albuquerque, included 70 tribal participants. HUD is working to incorporate information on EPA's green building programs into their training nationally.

EPA, with HUD participation, also organized the National Tribal Building Codes Summit in Denver, Colorado in June 2011. The summit was the first event that brought together tribal, federal, and non-profit organizations to advance green building code adoption by tribes and address barriers to code development and implementation. EPA provided input to HUD's draft white paper on *Impediments to Sustainable Construction in Indian Country*. This paper will inform HUD's green building technical assistance efforts for tribal communities. To view the paper: [www.huduser.org/portal/publications/pdf/na\\_Impediments\\_SCinIC\\_Draft\\_Report.pdf](http://www.huduser.org/portal/publications/pdf/na_Impediments_SCinIC_Draft_Report.pdf).

EPA and HUD continue to work with tribes to collect information about development of green building codes. They've collaborated with the Intertribal Council on Utility Policy to send out a survey to tribes, results of which are being used by EPA to improve model green building codes for tribal communities. So that both agencies can continue to provide technical assistance on tribal housing construction, HUD plans to include EPA in coordination with tribes receiving future ICDBG funding.

# 3

## Enhancing Economic Competitiveness

### ◆ Los Angeles River Revitalization

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EPA and HUD have been supporting HUD's 2010 Community Challenge Grant to the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) for the Northeast Los Angeles Riverfront Collaborative (NELA). The CRA received the grant to work with other agencies on a strategy to redevelop 2,200 acres of land near the Los Angeles River. Challenges emerged when redevelopment agencies in California were dissolved in 2012; fortunately, the Los Angeles Community Development Department was able to assume the project. Planning activities restarted and the city is currently on track to meet an ambitious schedule of expected outcomes.



*Los Angeles River (Photo courtesy of City of Los Angeles)*

The NELA project was adopted as a priority of the Urban Waters Federal Partnership – an initiative led by EPA that established the Los Angeles River as a pilot location in 2011. EPA and HUD funding supports a dedicated staff person to lead the partnership in coordinating activities between federal and local partners that support Los Angeles River Watershed revitalization efforts. The NELA project builds upon the growing momentum of efforts already underway to transform the river, and aims to create a Riverfront District as a focal point of community revitalization, recreational activities, environmental stewardship, sustainable civic engagement, and economic growth for the city.

### ◆ Apache/Navajo Counties Consortium Regional Planning Grant Support

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EPA and FTA coordinated with HUD to provide technical assistance to support efforts of the Apache/Navajo Counties Consortium, which received a HUD Sustainable Communities Regional

Planning grant in 2010. The goals of the grant included bringing together the cities and towns of Apache and Navajo Counties and three tribal nations (Navajo, Apache, and Hopi) in Northeastern Arizona to plan for sustainable growth and economic development.

To encourage consideration of relevant environmental issues and involvement of tribal communities, EPA and FTA staff that work with tribes in the area reviewed the grant work plan. The agencies also provided technical assistance on challenges that the consortium faced in implementing the grant. Discussions focused on transportation, water and wastewater needs, housing, cultural and climate considerations, and economic development opportunities.

## 4 Supporting Existing Communities

### ◆ Greening America's Capitals, Phoenix, Arizona

Phoenix, Arizona was chosen as one of five cities nationwide to receive assistance from EPA's Greening America's Capitals program in 2011. EPA worked with the City of Phoenix to plan an urban design workshop that focused on Grand Avenue, a street in downtown Phoenix that the city had targeted for revitalization.

EPA and representatives of HUD's Phoenix field office joined city, state, and community organizations at the workshop February 28 - March 1, 2012. The workshop focused on creating streetscape designs for a segment of Grand Avenue, and identifying improvements and implementation strategies to support walking and biking, green stormwater management, and alternative energy along the corridor. The city team plans to use the products of the workshop



*A current view of Grand Avenue in Phoenix (left), with a rendering (right) produced as part of the Greening America's Capitals project, of what the corridor could look like with landscaping and streetscape improvements. (Photo and image courtesy of PLAN\*et)*

to complement work funded by a HUD Community Challenge grant to plan transit-oriented development around the city's light rail system, and to move towards implementation of the workshop's recommendations. City staff presented the final report of the project to their city council in September 2012 and are seeking funding for the proposed improvements. The final report is available at <http://epa.gov/smartgrowth/greencapitals.htm>.

### ◆ California State Revolving Fund Pilot Project

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The State of California was one of three states chosen in 2010 to receive technical assistance from EPA's Office of Sustainable Communities and Office of Water to explore ways to green the water infrastructure state revolving loan fund (SRF) programs. These programs provide loans to communities for wastewater and drinking water infrastructure. A workshop was held in February 2011 with EPA headquarters and regional staff, staff of California's State Water Quality Control Board, and other state agencies to discuss opportunities to use the SRF program to achieve more sustainable planning and development. Follow-up coordination between EPA and the State Water Board identified the best options to promote sustainability. Participants published a report describing options for an implementation strategy. The final report is available at [http://water.epa.gov/grants\\_funding/cwsrf/upload/CA-SRF-Pilot-Report-09-10-12.pdf](http://water.epa.gov/grants_funding/cwsrf/upload/CA-SRF-Pilot-Report-09-10-12.pdf).

## 5

## Coordinating and Leveraging Federal Policies and Investment

### ◆ San Francisco Bay Area Regional Planning Work Group

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Based on interest from public and private partners in the San Francisco Bay Area, in 2010, FTA, EPA, and HUD formed a workgroup with staff of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), the regional planning agencies for the San Francisco Bay Area, as well as California State Departments of Housing and Transportation, and the nonprofit organization Reconnecting America. The goals of the workgroup are to share information on funding opportunities and other agency actions, get feedback from the local agencies on federal efforts, discuss issues that effect planning and development, and focus on specific pilot projects in the Bay Area.

One focus area has been the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system extension to San Jose. The

workgroup hopes to maximize the community and economic benefits of this significant federal and local investment by encouraging the coordination of transportation, land use, and housing planning. The workgroup has met with housing and planning staff from cities that will have stations on the extension (Milpitas and San Jose). At these meetings, the group discussed station area planning and toured sites of future development. The group also sought to resolve issues such as the need to fund pedestrian and streetscape improvements near the transit stations, parking policies, attracting employment opportunities to station areas, and methods to encourage a mix of housing options that will be served by new transit service.

Another focus of the workgroup is the San Francisco Bay Area Regional Prosperity Plan. MTC received \$5 million from HUD's Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grant program to support development of a regional economic opportunity strategy for the Bay Area. The focus of the Prosperity Plan is job creation, expanding economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals, and increasing housing options, particularly in close proximity to transit. EPA, HUD, and FTA are participating in workgroups for the Prosperity Plan on Economic Prosperity, Housing, and Equity.

As part of the workgroup's focus on policy issues, the group is analyzing the *Federal Barriers to Local Housing and Transportation Coordination* paper, jointly authored by HUD and DOT. Workgroup participants are drafting an update to the paper that highlights what policy changes have been made through the passage of DOT reauthorization legislation (MAP-21) and other recent changes to HUD programs that address barriers identified in the original paper. The group is also including Bay Area and California best practices, and other innovative methods that might be explored in the future.

## ◆ Tribal Outreach

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EPA, HUD, and DOT continue to seek opportunities to work with tribes on sustainable communities projects. In February 2011, FTA and HUD presented at the EPA-sponsored Multi-Agency Sustainable Infrastructure Resource Forum for Tribes. At the forum, the agencies shared information about federal resources available to tribes.

At EPA's Pacific Southwest Tribal Conference in 2010, EPA, FTA, HUD, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) presented on the partnership and resources available from each of the agencies. At the 2011 conference, EPA presented on tribal sustainable development programs and practices. The presentation was part of a keynote panel session moderated by EPA's Regional Administrator, with several hundred conference participants. It focused on partnership principles, rural implementation efforts, tribal green building, and HUD programs that support green building. During the 2012 Tribal Conference, EPA presented to tribes on EnergyStar, WaterSense, and the Tribal Green Building Codes Workgroup, incorporating examples from HUD-funded tribal green homes.

In June 2012, EPA organized a webcast to highlight sustainable communities projects in Indian Country, with a focus on work in the western regions. The goal was to kick-off a conversation among various federal agencies on how to better support smart growth and green building efforts with tribes. Projects discussed on the webcast involved EPA, HUD, FEMA, USDA, and a variety of tribal and non-profit partners.

## ◆ **Federal Regional Council Fresno/San Joaquin Valley Coordination**

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Prior to the Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) initiative, EPA, HUD, and DOT worked with other federal agencies through the Federal Regional Council (FRC) to focus resources and assistance in Fresno, California, and throughout the San Joaquin Valley. EPA co-chaired an Environmental, Health, Housing, and Energy Workgroup, made up of federal and local agencies and community organizations. The workgroup identified a project to combine home energy efficiency retrofits with home health intervention, targeting asthmatic households in Fresno. In addition, the interagency relationships that were built as part of the FRC focus on Fresno



*Partnership and SC2 staff meet with state and local officials and community members to discuss integration of planning for high-speed rail and local planning efforts in Fresno (Photo courtesy of Carolyn Mulvihill)*

helped create a foundation for successes under SC2. Through the FRC partnership work, federal agency staff gained a better understanding of how programs and resources could be targeted and leveraged for Fresno and other communities. SC2 brought a focus to Fresno that has helped to implement or advance many of the goals identified during initial partnership work.

FRC coordination on issues facing the San Joaquin Valley also supported the successful application by California State University Fresno Foundation and the Smart Valley Places

consortium to HUD's Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grant program in 2010. Since award of that grant to support regional planning efforts in the San Joaquin Valley, EPA, HUD, and DOT have supported implementation of the project. EPA provided feedback to HUD on initial grant work plan materials and worked with the grantees and other agencies to align EPA work in the San Joaquin Valley with community work under the grant. EPA, HUD, and DOT also attended the kick-off and mid-term events for Smart Valley Places, which included discussions of how to support sustainable development in the valley and connecting urban and rural

communities. The grant is supporting planning work in cities throughout the valley, including the City of Fresno's general plan update, which has been greatly leveraged by the SC2 team as it has partnered with the city to advance downtown revitalization goals.

### ◆ **Southern California Coordination**

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In addition to supporting the Community Challenge Grant to the City of Los Angeles and work around the Los Angeles River, EPA and HUD have worked together on various efforts in Southern California.

Staff from EPA's Southern California Field Office and HUD's Los Angeles Office met regularly in 2010 and 2011 to seek opportunities for collaboration and local engagement. Topics included quantifying reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through energy efficiency and other upgrades to HUD-supported housing; helping cities and counties identify projects and track progress towards meeting state-mandated (SB 375) targets for reduction of GHG emissions from passenger vehicles; coordinating healthy homes and weatherization programs; and the Urban Waters Pilot Program. Goals for the agencies included publicizing Southern California success stories and encouraging cities and counties to incorporate the partnership's principles into their projects.

EPA and HUD coordinated to facilitate use of HUD funds for energy efficiency upgrades to homes. The agencies worked with the Southern California City of Fullerton on this effort, seeking models for tracking the environmental results of upgrades. EPA also shared information with HUD on efforts to manage stormwater with green infrastructure.

### ◆ **Tucson/Pima County, Arizona Pilot Project**

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In 2010, EPA, FTA, and HUD provided technical assistance to the City of Tucson on their plans for development around streetcar stations, which are currently under construction. FTA worked with HUD and EPA to assist the city in finding potential sources of funding to construct prototype transit shelters and streetscapes designed by students from the University of Arizona's College of Architecture. The goals were to use innovative site design features, construction materials, and plant species to create hospitable microclimates at stations along the future streetcar line.

EPA also partnered with Tucson and Pima County to support implementation of smart growth objectives set forth in a 2011-2015 Action Plan for Water Sustainability that was adopted by the city and county governing boards. EPA provided technical assistance in a number of areas covered by the plan.

# 6

## Valuing Communities and Neighborhoods

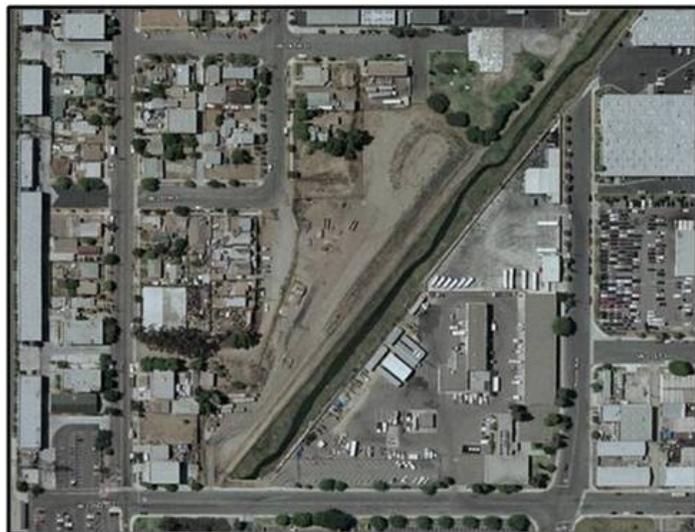
### ◆ **Brownfields Sustainability Pilot Project, National City, California**

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National City, California was one of five national Brownfield Sustainability Pilot projects selected in 2010 under the partnership. To support the pilot, EPA worked with HUD, DOT, and local partners in support of National City's goal to transform a 14-acre public works yard into a sustainable affordable housing and transit-oriented development.

The Westside Affordable Housing Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in National City is the result of five years of community involvement by local residents. It is intended to be the catalyst for overall neighborhood change through the city's Westside Specific Plan. The project is also an opportunity to test HUD's new policy for building affordable housing on former brownfield sites.

In community meetings, residents and business owners expressed interest in the elimination of toxic hazards, and reclaiming the neighborhood for residential uses, especially affordable housing for families. The proposed development project will include 201 affordable housing units located immediately adjacent to the existing 24th Street Station, part of the light rail system serving metropolitan San Diego. The site is contaminated with hazardous materials, identified through an EPA Brownfields Assessment grant and two site investigations by the California Department of Toxic



*Existing site of proposed development (Photo courtesy of National City)*

Substances Control (DTSC). DTSC will oversee remediation needed for redevelopment. EPA has provided approximately \$1.5 million in Brownfields grant funding and technical support, enabling National City to identify approximately 200 brownfields sites. At least 50 sites are in the 165-acre Westside neighborhood that is home to the project site.

As a part of the Brownfields Sustainability Pilot work, a draft amortization plan was completed and tested by the city. The amortization plan is a tool for the city to prioritize the relocation of incompatible industrial uses to more appropriate locations. The city prepared this plan to address toxic hazards believed to be contributing to high asthma rates in the neighborhood and to relocate industrial uses that are not compatible with the Westside Specific Plan.

To support sustainable development of the site, incorporating energy efficiency, stormwater and flood control management, walking trails, and reduced dependence on fossil fuels, a recommendations report for green remediation, open space, and habitat restoration for the project site was also completed. This report will help inform the city and its developers on options for greening the affordable housing project and redeveloping a former gas station site as open space or natural habitat. The technical assistance team conducted a community workshop in November 2010 to inform the community about green remediation and reuse on brownfield sites. The final plan to redevelop the site will be further shaped by community feedback and EPA's ongoing Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) process.

EPA's regional Brownfields staff presented a webinar in 2012 for EPA staff nationwide on this project, including the amortization tool. The city and the local environmental group also presented, along with other Brownfield Sustainability Pilot Projects, at the 2012 New Partners for Smart Growth Conference.

The report and amortization tool can be found at [www.epa.gov/region9/brownfields/national-city/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/region9/brownfields/national-city/index.html).



*Conceptual drawing of proposed development  
(Image courtesy of National City)*

## ◆ **Brownfields Pilot Project, West Fresno, California**

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Brownfields funding supported community engagement on reuse of brownfield sites in West Fresno, California in 2011. EPA coordinated with contractors, local government, and community based organizations, to engage community members on what they would like to see in redevelopment of brownfield sites in their neighborhood. In meetings, community members discussed how to participate in the general plan update that the city was undertaking, the brownfield redevelopment process, local brownfield sites and potential reuse, and community capacity building needs.

EPA also engaged the Fresno Youth Council and other community members to explore the possibility of creating an urban community garden. In March 2012, EPA held a meeting at Edison High School in southwest Fresno with 60 community members. The meeting presented the garden project to the community, and gave residents an opportunity to comment and vote on their preferences. Voting showed an overwhelming interest in participating in a garden, a desire to have a farmers' market, and the need for specific garden elements such as teaching areas.

The Fresno Youth Council then secured a site for the garden next to Edison High School. The city will likely apply for EPA support to do a site assessment to screen for contamination. EPA has been working with USDA and other agencies to explore options for technical assistance and funding for this project.

A West Fresno Action Plan and West Fresno Garden Implementation Plan were written as part of this pilot and can be found at [www.epa.gov/region9/brownfields/fresnoW/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/region9/brownfields/fresnoW/index.html).

### ◆ Walkability Audit, Contra Costa County, California

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Contra Costa County, California was chosen to receive a walkability audit workshop from the EPA Office of Sustainable Communities' Building Blocks Technical Assistance Program in 2012. The workshop was hosted by the Monument Community Partnership (MCP), a community-based organization in the City of Concord, California. The workshop was unique in that community members were the target audience, rather than local government staff. In an effort to engage the primarily Spanish-speaking audience, Spanish translation was also available.

The workshop took place on August 18, 2012 and focused on the opportunities and challenges to walkability on sections of Detroit Avenue and Monument Boulevard, two major pedestrian corridors in the neighborhood. Attendees included local residents, business owners, and staff of the Contra Costa County Departments of Health Services and Transportation Planning. Participants identified problem areas along the corridors and proposed improvements to increase safety and encourage



*Community members discuss how to address walkability issues identified during the workshop (Photo courtesy of Carolyn Mulvihill)*

walking and biking by community members.

Subsequent to the workshop, county Health Services staff continued to work with the community under a Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) grant from Kaiser Permanente, to develop community capacity for engagement in local planning. This continuing work will support recommendations developed during the workshop to identify community priorities for infrastructure and policy improvements, and coordinate with city and county decision makers to push for those improvements.

The community, with support from the Health Services Department, has begun to achieve goals identified during the workshop. The community has reached out to the city and local transit agency to address relevant issues. This resulted in immediate accomplishments, including the city streets department repainting a crosswalk in front of the local elementary school, police doing more speed enforcement in the area, and a reflector being attached to a tree alongside Detroit Avenue to slow traffic. The transit agency provided additional trash cans at a bus stop that had problems with excessive trash, and they are conducting a pedestrian access study using the results of the workshop. The transit agency has also committed to looking at relocating a bus stop where there is no sidewalk to an adjacent area that is safer and more accessible. The city is looking into a car dealership that parks cars in a potential public sidewalk right-of-way to determine whether that is private or public land, and how to address that obstacle to pedestrians. The city has committed to adding sidewalks to areas of the corridor that are deficient and plan to apply for the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's One Bay Area Grant program for funding. An additional long-term goal is for the community to work with the city to explore adding a signal to a Detroit Avenue intersection that has limited visibility and speeding cars.